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THE  
INVOCATION OF SAINTS

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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THE

# Invocation of Saints

AN ARTICLE REPRINTED, WITH SLIGHT ADDITIONS,  
FROM THE 'CHURCH QUARTERLY REVIEW'

BY

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## PREFACE

THIS book consists of an article reprinted, with slight additions, from the *Church Quarterly Review* for January, 1899. In sending it to the press, the author wishes to acknowledge the consideration and generosity with which he was consistently treated during a period of over ten years by the late editor of the *Review*, Mr. Christopher Knight Watson, and to thank the present editor for his permission to reprint this article and for other kindness.

The article was written in the first instance because it seemed to the author that a matter of moment was suffering from controversial handling, and that a service might be rendered by the clear setting out of important facts. It is now republished because he fears that the true issues are again likely to be obscured by controversy, and because he would fain do what little he can to



promote a calm and reasonable temper in which there may be hope of profitable consideration and discussion of history and doctrine.

The author is fully alive to the mischief which may result from the unguarded cultus of the saints. His own personal preferences, if he may refer to them, are strongly for the methods of prayer and worship which characterize the Liturgies and Offices of the Church rather than for those found in the devotions and litanies which popularized invocation. So far as the public worship of the Church of England is concerned, he recognizes that the use of any services outside the Book of Common Prayer can only be right by the sufferance of the Bishop of the Diocese.

But he cannot hide from himself the disastrous results which might ensue from wide-spread condemnations of the invocation of saints. The hope of a re-united Christendom is a hope which he would deem it falsity to Christian principle to abandon. However the Church of Rome may some day control and check unauthorized devotions, it cannot be anticipated that she will ever reverse the careful and guarded statements of the Council of Trent on this subject. And any who

should approach her with a demand for such a reversal would, in the judgment of the author, be placing themselves in a false position. If that be so, it follows that to condemn the invocation of saints is to put an unjustifiable barrier in the way of re-union with the Church of Rome.

And, if we are told that the hope of re-union must for the present at least be rather with the Churches of the East than with the rest of the Western Church, it is necessary to observe that Eastern Christians approve of and practise invocation certainly not less than those Christians who are in communion with the Pope.

There is a further reason which weighs on the mind of the present writer even more strongly from a practical point of view than those which depend on the hope of re-union. He is mindful of the honest, devout souls in the Church of England who have found not only happiness but also a means of spiritual growth in the practice which some would condemn. If the practice were contrary to Christian principle or to the truths to which the Church of Christ is committed, he would be among the first to say that, at whatever cost, the condemnation must be emphatically

declared. Believing as he does that the study of history does not show such a contradiction, it is his conviction that to insist on the wrongfulness of the practice would be to narrow the bounds of Christian liberty to an extent for which the needed authority is lacking.

For to require the rejection of what the Church has not rejected no less impairs the freedom of the Christian heritage than to require the affirmation of what the Church has not affirmed.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that love thee.



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## THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS

AMONG the questions to which recent controversies<sup>1</sup> in the Church of England have directed attention is that of the invocation of saints. The custom of seeking the prayers of the saints by the use of words directly addressed to them has during the last few months been condemned by some in high authority as in itself objectionable, and as disloyal to the English Church. On the other hand, there are those who, with a serious sense of responsibility, have admitted into their devotions invocations of the saints, and are convinced that in so doing they have acted with entire loyalty both to the Universal Church and to the part of the Church in which the Providence of God has placed them. And, apart alike from the deliberate condemnation of thinking men, and from the serious and thoughtful action of

<sup>1</sup> The controversies alluded to are those which preceded the first publication of this paper in the *Church Quarterly Review* for January 1899.



those who take pains to make their prayers Catholic and intelligent, the newspapers have contained many letters full of denunciations of devotions which the writers have apparently never taken the trouble to understand, and have supplied indications that such devotions are being widely used with that light-heartedness which characterizes much religious belief and practice at the present time.

In these circumstances it has seemed advisable to endeavour to present with some degree of fulness the historical facts and doctrinal teaching without which there cannot be any profitable consideration of this question.

To avoid confusion, it may be well to define that the phrase 'invocation of saints' is here used in the sense ordinarily attached to it at the present time, namely, to denote the practice of requesting departed saints for the help of their prayers to God. And to make the point perfectly clear, the modern 'form of the 'Hail Mary' may be given as an illustration :

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first part only of this devotion, ending with the word 'Jesus,' appears to have been in use in England in the middle ages. This shorter form was in most editions of the *Sarum Breviary* and in the *Primer* (see, e.g., Maskell, *Monumenta ritualia ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*,

The task before us is to consider the evidence as to the lawfulness and the expediency of methods of devotion of which the 'Hail Mary,' in the form in which we have quoted it, is representative.

A necessary preliminary to the consideration of invocation of saints is some treatment of what is ordinarily known as comprecation of saints. This differs from invocation in the respect that, while in invocation the words 'pray for us' or 'pray for me' are directly addressed to the saint or saints, in comprecation the request for the prayers of the saints is addressed to God. To quote again a representative instance, an ancient prayer of the Latin Church on the feast of St. Stephen ran thus :

Almighty and eternal God, who didst dedicate the firstfruits of the martyrs in the blood of thy holy deacon Stephen, grant, we beseech thee, that he who made supplication even for his persecutors may stand before thee as our intercessor.<sup>1</sup>

Christian thought has continuously clung to the belief that the souls of the departed are in a state

ii. 176). The longer form, as given above, is in the *Sarum Breviary* of 1531; see, e.g., Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesiæ Sarum*, ii. 2.

<sup>1</sup> 'Omnipotens æterne Deus, qui primitias martyrum in sancti levitæ Stephani sanguine dedicasti, tribue, quaesumus, ut pro nobis intercessor assistat, qui pro suis etiam persecutoribus supplicavit : ' see, e.g., Wilson, *The Gelasian Sacramentary*, p. 6. The same prayer, with slight verbal differences, is also in the Gregorian Sacramentary; see, e.g., St. Greg. Mag. t. iii. col. 10 (ed. Bened.).

of consciousness. Indeed, indications of this fact were not wanting in the Old Testament. In spite of the gloom which surrounded death before the resurrection of our Lord, both Isaiah<sup>1</sup> and Ezekiel<sup>2</sup> represent the disembodied souls as still retaining consciousness; and our Lord taught the Sadducees that the description of God in the book of Exodus as the God of those who had departed this life was a sign that they were alive and, it would seem, conscious also.<sup>3</sup> The New Testament shows the same truth with greater clearness. The imagery of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, depicting a condition of receiving comfort and a state of being in torment between death and the end of the world,<sup>4</sup> however little the details of parabolic language may in some cases be pressed, could hardly have been employed if our Lord had not intended to represent the departed as still conscious. The promise to the penitent robber, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,'<sup>5</sup> does not suggest that after death his soul would be in a state of unconsciousness. The preaching of our Lord in the unseen world between His crucifixion and His resurrection<sup>6</sup> shows that His human soul and the souls of those to whom He preached were con-

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xiv. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Ex. iii. 6; St. Matt. xxii. 29-32.

<sup>5</sup> St. Luke, xxiii. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxxi. 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke, xvi. 19-31.

<sup>6</sup> 1 St. Peter, iii. 18-20.



scious. The 'souls of them that had been slain for the word of God' whom St. John 'saw underneath the altar'<sup>1</sup> were in a state of conscious activity, and the retention of consciousness is implied by St. Paul's description of his anticipated condition after death as being 'to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.'<sup>2</sup> Following the teaching thus contained in Holy Scripture, the writers of the early Church habitually regarded the souls of the departed as being in the possession of conscious life.

No writer of authority in the early Church appears to have doubted that in the case of the holy dead to retain consciousness was to retain the power of prayer. It would be almost inconceivable that those who in this life had learnt to exercise their spiritual capacities in dependence upon God should on passing through death cease to be able to pray. The souls whom St. John saw under the altar were engaged in prayer. The general sense of Christian thought was well expressed by St. Jerome when he wrote :

if the Apostles and Martyrs, while still in the body, are able to pray for others when they still ought to be full of care for themselves, how much more can they do so after they have been crowned in victory and triumph. One man, Moses, obtains pardon from God for six hundred

<sup>1</sup> Rev. vi. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. i. 23.

thousand armed men, and Stephen, the imitator of his Lord and the first martyr in Christ, begs forgiveness for his persecutors; and shall their power be less after they have begun to be with Christ? <sup>1</sup>

Indeed, so widespread has been this belief, that the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 exclaimed that the martyr Flavian was praying for them,<sup>2</sup> and the 'Saxon Confession' of 1551 declared 'There is no doubt that the blessed pray for the Church.'<sup>3</sup> And for those who looked on the saintly dead as conscious and as capable of prayer it would be a natural inference that it was right to plead with God for the benefit of their intercessions.

Accordingly, we find that all the evidence from the teaching and practice of the early Church tends to show the existence of belief in the lawfulness and utility of asking God for the benefit of the prayers of the saints. To quote the Liturgy of St. James as an instance of liturgical practice, the priest is there directed, after commemorating the Blessed Virgin, St. John the Baptist, the apostles

<sup>1</sup> St. Jer. *C. Vigilantium*, 7, 'Si apostoli et martyres adhuc in corpore constituti possunt orare pro caeteris, quando pro se adhuc debent esse solliciti, quanto magis post coronas, victorias et triumphos? Unus homo Moyses sexcentis millibus armatorum impetrat a Deo veniam, et Stephanus imitator Domini sui et primus martyr in Christo pro persecutoribus veniam deprecatur; et postquam cum Christo esse coeperint, minus valebunt?'

<sup>2</sup> *Conc. Chalc.*, Actio xi. (Hardouin, *Concilia*, ii. 556 D).

<sup>3</sup> *Saxon Confession*, 22; see, e.g., *Sylloge Confessionum*, p. 311.

and evangelists, the prophets and patriarchs, St. Stephen, 'the first deacon and first martyr,' and all the saints, to go on to say

not that we are worthy to make mention of their blessedness, but that they also standing before Thy terrible and awful throne may in turn make mention of our sad state, and that we may find grace and mercy in Thy sight, O Lord, to help us in time of need.<sup>1</sup>

To quote St. Cyril of Jerusalem's *Catechetical Lectures on the Mysteries* as an indication of the teaching given at Jerusalem in the middle of the fourth century, he explains the reference to the saints in the Liturgy as a prayer to God for the help of their intercessions :

Then we make mention also of those who have fallen asleep before us, first, of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that God would at their prayers and intercessions receive our supplication.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, i. 56-7: "Ἐτι μνησθῆναι καταξίωσον . . . ἐξαιρέτως τῆς παναγίας ἀχράντου ὑπερευλογημένης δεσποίνης ἡμῶν θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας . . . πάντων τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος ἀγίων σου· οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἄξιοι μνημονεύειν τῆς ἐκείνων μακαριότητος ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ παρεστῶτες τῷ φοβερῷ καὶ φρικτῷ σου βήματι ἀντιμνημονεύσωσι τῆς ἡμῶν ἐλεεινότητος καὶ εὐρωμεν χάριν καὶ ἔλεος ἐνώπιόν σου Κύριε εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν. Cf. *ibid.* 73-4, 76, 78, 93-4, 169, 230, 264, 330-1, 338, 406-7, 415, 419, 466. Portions of these passages are probably late additions to the Liturgies. That this is not the case with regard to the general prayer for the help of the intercessions of the saints may be seen by comparing the explanation of the service quoted from St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> St. Cyr. Jer. *Cat. Myst.* v. 9, Εἴτα μνημονεύομεν καὶ τῶν προκεκοιμημένων, πρῶτον, πατριαρχῶν, προφητῶν, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων, ὅπως ὁ θεὸς ταῖς εὐχαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ πρεσβείαις προσδέξεται ἡμῶν τὴν δέησιν.

And there is no trace of any doubt that it was right and wise for the Church on earth to commemorate departed saints as a means of pleading that God would grant to the living help in answer to their prayers. There is indeed an absence of earlier positive testimony than that which we have cited. Against this may be set the consideration that, granted the undisputed facts of the continued life and continued power of prayer of the saints, it is simply an ordinary act of the Christian life to ask God that their prayers may be of service to us.

On the distinct but connected subject of the invocation of saints, there is no direct evidence in Holy Scripture, or in the first two Christian centuries. In the third century there is little more, merely, that is, a passage in Origen of doubtful meaning. In his treatise *On Prayer* Origen, taking as a starting point St. Paul's words 'I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,'<sup>1</sup> limits the use of 'prayer' to words addressed to God,<sup>2</sup> and says of 'supplications,' 'intercessions,' and 'giving of thanks':

it is not improper to address these to saints, and two of them, I mean intercession and thanksgiving, not only to

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. Tim. ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> This is not the place to discuss whether Origen's restriction of the offering of 'prayer' in the strict sense to the Father implied any disbelief in the true Deity of the Son.



saints but also to men, but supplication only to saints, as for instance to some Paul or Peter, that they may aid us, making us worthy to obtain the power granted unto them for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>1</sup>

On the ground of the general structure of the passage and of a statement made elsewhere by Origen that

every supplication and prayer and intercession and thanksgiving is to be sent up to the supreme God through the High Priest, who is above all the angels, the living Word and God,<sup>2</sup>

the 'saints' referred to have been interpreted by some writers to be living saints.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, so competent a critic as Dr. Bigg, who has brought to the close study of Origen's language and thought great insight and impartiality, expresses his opinion that

Origen no doubt regarded this kind of prayer as lawfully offered to saints, whether on earth or in heaven.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *De Oratone*, 14, δέησιν μὲν οὖν καὶ ἔντευξιν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν οὐκ ἄποπον καὶ ἀνθρώποις ['Lego cum Bentleio: ἀγίοις,' Delarue *in loco*] προσευγεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν δύο, λέγω δὲ ἔντευξιν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν, οὐ μόνον ἀγίοις, ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ ἀνθρώποις· τὴν δὲ δέησιν μόνον ἀγίοις, εἴ τις εὐρεθείη Παῦλος ἢ Πέτρος ἵνα ὠφελήσωσιν ἡμᾶς ἀξίους ποιοῦντες τοῦ τυχεῖν τῆς δεδομένης αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίας πρὸς τὰ ἀμαρτήματα ἀφιέναι.

<sup>2</sup> Origen, *C. Celsum*, v. 4, Πᾶσαν μὲν γὰρ δέησιν καὶ προσευχὴν καὶ ἔντευξιν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν ἀναπεμπτόν τῳ ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεῷ διὰ τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων ἀγγέλων ἀρχιερέως, ἐμψύχου λόγου καὶ Θεοῦ.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Luckcock, *After Death*, pp. 187-8.

<sup>4</sup> Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 185, note <sup>1</sup>.

After Origen, the earliest evidence bearing on the subject is probably a passage in the oration of St. Gregory of Nazianzus delivered as a panegyric upon St. Cyprian, in which it is told that the virgin Justina was assailed by the magician Cyprian, here identified with the great Bishop of Carthage before his conversion, and in her distress,

despairing of every other means of help, fled to the protection of God, and took as her defender against the hateful lust her own bridegroom, who delivered Susanna and preserved Thecla, the one from the cruel elders, and the other from the tyrannous suitor and her still more tyrannous mother, that is her bridegroom Christ ;

and

beseeking the Virgin Mary to help a virgin in danger, was delivered from her peril.<sup>1</sup>

It may be doubted whether the facts here described are accurately narrated, or whether, if the events took place as thus recorded, much could be based on an isolated instance of the practice of invocation on the part of one Christian virgin in dire distress ; but the passage at least shows that St. Gregory of Nazianzus saw no

<sup>1</sup> St. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* xxiv. 10-11 : πάντων ἀπογνοῦσαι τῶν ἄλλων, ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν καταφεύγει καὶ προστάτην ποιείται κατὰ τοῦ μισητοῦ πόθου τὸν ἑαυτῆς νυμφίον, ὃς καὶ Σωσάνναν ἐρρύσατο καὶ Θέκλαν διέσωσεν, τὴν μὲν ἀπὸ πικρῶν πρεσβυτέρων, τὴν δὲ ἀπὸ τυράννου μισητῆρος καὶ τυραννικώτερας μητρὸς· τίνα τοῦτον ; Χριστόν . . . ταῦτα καὶ πλείω τούτων ἐπιφεμίζουσα καὶ τὴν παρθένον Μαρίαν ἱκετεύουσα βοηθῆσαι παρθένῳ κινδυνευούσῃ, κ.τ.λ.

improbability in a story of a Christian in the first half of the third century seeking the aid, in one form or another, of the holy Mother of our Lord.

About the practice of St. Gregory of Nazianzus himself there is no doubt. In addition to other invocations elsewhere, he addresses St. Cyprian at the end of the oration already quoted :

Do thou look down on us propitiously from above and direct our speech and life, and be a shepherd or a co-shepherd to this holy flock ; and directing the rest, as far as may be, for the best, and driving away the grievous wolves, the hunters of syllables and phrases, and bestowing on us a more perfect and brighter illumination of the Holy Trinity, in Whose presence thou standest, to Whom we give worship and glory.<sup>1</sup>

That it was the help of prayer which was thus sought from St. Cyprian by St. Gregory of Nazianzus may be seen from his address to St. Basil in another oration :

Do thou, divine and sacred one, look down upon us from above, and by thy intercessions either stay the thorn in the flesh given us by God, our discipline, or persuade us to endure it bravely, and direct our whole life for us for the best ; and, if we be removed hence, receive us in thy

<sup>1</sup> St. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* xxiv. 19, σὺ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἐποπτεύεις ἄνωθεν ἰλεως καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον διεξάγεις λόγον καὶ βίον καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦτο ποιῖον ποιμαίνεις ἢ συμποιμαίνεις τά τε ἄλλα εὐθύνων ὡς οἶόν τε πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον καὶ τοὺς βαρεῖς λύκους ἀποπεμπόμενος τοὺς θηρευτὰς τῶν συλλαβῶν καὶ τῶν λεξέων, καὶ τὴν τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος ἑλλαμψιν, ἧς σὺ νῦν παραστάτης, τελεωτέραν τε καὶ λαμπροτέραν ἡμῖν χαριζόμενος, ἣν προσκυνούμεν, ἣν δοξάζομεν.

tabernacles that, living together and together beholding more clearly and more completely the holy and blessed Trinity, of which we have now in some degree received the image, our longing may at last be satisfied, and we may gain this recompense for the battles we have fought and the attacks we have endured.<sup>1</sup>

St. Basil the Great, the contemporary of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and thus after death invoked by him, not only calls the Forty Martyrs 'co-operators in prayer' in a rhetorical address to them,<sup>2</sup> but expressly declares what his own practice is, and the object at which it aims :

I accept also the holy apostles, prophets, and martyrs, and I call upon them for their intercession to God, that by them, that is by their mediation, the good God may be propitious to me and that I may be granted redemption for my offences.<sup>3</sup>

St. Gregory of Nyssa invokes the martyr Theodore :

<sup>1</sup> St. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* xliii. 82, σὺ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἐποπτεύεις ἄνωθεν, ὡ θεῖα καὶ ἱερὰ κεφαλὴ, καὶ τὸν δεδομένον ἡμῖν παρὰ Θεοῦ σκόλοπα τῆς σαρκὸς, τὴν ἡμετέραν παιδαγωγίαν, ἣ στήσαιο ταῖς σεαυτοῦ πρεσβείαις ἢ πείσαις καρτερῶς φέρειν· καὶ τὸν πάντα βίον ἡμῖν διεξάγοις πρὸς τὸ λυσιτελέστατον. εἰ δὲ μετασταίημεν, δέξαιο κἀκείθεν ἡμᾶς ταῖς σεαυτοῦ σκηναῖς, ὡς ἂν ἀλλήλοις συζῶντες καὶ συνεποπτεύοντες τὴν ἀγίαν καὶ μακαρίαν Τριάδα καθαρώτερόν τε καὶ τελεώτερον, ἧς νῦν μετρίως δεδέγμεθα τὰς ἐμφάσεις ἐνταῦθα σταίημεν τῆς ἐφέσεως καὶ ταύτην λάβοιμεν ὡν πεπολεμήκαμεν καὶ πεπολεμήμεθα τὴν ἀντίδοσιν.

<sup>2</sup> St. Basil, *Hom. in quadraginta martyres*, 8, δέησεως συνεργοί.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, *Ep. cecix.* (al. ccv.) δέχομαι δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἁγίους ἀποστόλους, προφῆτας, καὶ μάρτυρας, καὶ εἰς τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν ἰκεσίαν τούτους ἐπικαλοῦμαι, τοῦ δι' αὐτῶν, ἧγουν διὰ τῆς μεσιτείας αὐτῶν, ἱλεῶν μοι γενέσθαι τὸν φιλόανθρωπον Θεόν, καὶ λύτρον μοι τῶν πταισμάτων γενέσθαι καὶ δοθῆναι. The genuineness of this epistle has been doubted.



Ask for peace, that these assemblies may not cease, that the frantic and lawless barbarian may not rage against temples and altars, that the profane may not tread under foot that which is holy ; <sup>1</sup>

and addresses St. Ephraem :

Do thou, standing by the divine altar, and ministering in company with angels to the all-holy Trinity, the source of life, remember all of us, asking for us remission of sins and enjoyment of the eternal kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

St. Chrysostom exhorts Christians :

Let us flee to the intercessions of the saints and let us beseech them to pray for us ; <sup>3</sup>

and, in the course of a description of the greatness of the kingdom of Christ, says :

The tombs of the servants of the Crucified are more splendid than the palaces of kings, not for the greatness and beauty of the buildings alone, though even here they surpass them, but, what is far more, in the zeal of those who frequent them. For even he who is clad in the purple himself goes to embrace those tombs, and laying

<sup>1</sup> St. Greg. Nyss. *De S. Theodoro Mart.* (t. iii. p. 585, Paris, 1638), αἰτησον εἰρήνην ἵνα αἱ πολυηγόρεις αὐται μὴ λήξωσιν, ἵνα μὴ κωμάσῃ κατὰ νῶν καὶ θυσιαστηρίων λυσσῶν καὶ ἄθεσμος βάρβαρος, ἵνα μὴ πατήσῃ τὰ ἅγια βέβηλος.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem, De vita S. patr. Ephraem. Syr.* (t. iii. p. 616), σὺ δὲ τῷ θεῷ παριστάμενος θυσιαστηρίῳ καὶ τῇ ζωαρχικῇ καὶ ὑπεραγίᾳ λειτουργῶν σὺν ἀγγέλοις Τριάδι, μέμνησο πάντων ἡμῶν αἰτούμενος ἡμῖν ἁμαρτημάτων ἄφεσιν αἰωνίου τε βασιλείας ἀπολαυσιν.

<sup>3</sup> St. Chrys. *In Genes. Hom.* xliv. 2, καταφεύγωμεν μὲν ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν ἁγίων πρεσβείας καὶ παρακαλῶμεν ὥστε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν δεηθῆναι.

aside his pride, stands entreating the saints to be his advocates with God, and he who has the diadem begs the tent-maker and the fisherman, even now that they are dead, to be his patrons.<sup>1</sup>

St. Ephraem the Syrian addresses the martyrs :

Victorious martyrs . . . intercede, ye holy ones, on behalf of us who are vain and sinners and full of sloth, that the grace of Christ may come upon us and enlighten the hearts of all the slothful that we may love him.<sup>2</sup>

Be ye intercessors before the throne for me who am vain, that I may be found there, being saved by the help of your intercessions through the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;<sup>3</sup>

and invokes St. Basil :

Intercede for me, who am most miserable, and recall me by thy intercessions.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrys. *In Ep. ii ad Cor. Hom.* xxvi. 5, οἱ τάφοι τῶν δούλων τοῦ σταυρωθέντος λαμπρότεροι τῶν βασιλικῶν εἰσιν αὐλῶν, οὐ τῷ μεγέθει καὶ τῷ κάλλει τῶν οἰκοδομημάτων μόνον, καὶ τούτῳ μὲν γὰρ κρατοῦσιν, ἀλλ', ὃ πολλῷ πλέον ἐστὶ, τῇ σπουδῇ τῶν συνιόντων· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ τὴν ἀλουργίδα περικείμενος ἀπέρχεται τὰ σήματα ἐκεῖνα περιπτυσόμενος, καὶ τὸν τύφον ἀποθέμενος ἔστηκε δεόμενος τῶν ἁγίων ὥστε αὐτοῦ προστῆναι παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ τοῦ σκηνοποιοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀλιέως προστατῶν καὶ τετελετωγκότων δείται ὁ τὸ διάδημα ἔχων.

<sup>2</sup> St. Eph. Syr. *Enc. in mart. (Opera Graeca, t. iii. p. 251, Rome, 1743-6)*, ἀθλοφόροι μάρτυρες . . . πρεσβεύσατε ἅγιοι ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῶν χαύνων καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ μεστῶν ῥαθυμίας ἵνα ἔλθῃ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἡ χάρις τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ φωτίσῃ καρδίαν ἀπάντων τῶν ῥαθύμων, ἵνα αὐτὸν ἀγαπῶμεν.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 254), γίνεσθε, οὓν πρεσβεύται ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ τοῦ χαύνου ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος, ὅπως εὔρεθῶ ἐκεῖ δι' ὑμῶν πρεσβειῶν σωζόμενος χάριτι τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem, Enc. in Magn. Bas.* (t. ii. p. 296), πρέσβευε ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ τοῦ σφόδρα ἐλεινοῦ καὶ ἀνακάλεσαί με ταῖς πρεσβείαις σου. It will be remembered by scholars that there are difficult questions connected with the text of St. Ephraem.

There is like evidence from the West as from the East. St. Ambrose teaches :

Martyrs are to be besought, whose patronage we seem to claim for ourselves by having their bodies as a kind of pledge. They who washed away whatever sins they had in their own blood are able to entreat for our sins ; for they are God's martyrs, our leaders, the spectators of our life and actions. Let us not be ashamed to employ them as intercessors for our weakness, because they themselves have known the weaknesses of the body, even when they overcame.<sup>1</sup>

St. Augustine describes the benefit of the burial of Christians at the memorials of the Saints as being that the living may be reminded to commend the souls of the departed to those who are thus kept in remembrance ;<sup>2</sup> and, like others of the Fathers, is evidently without the slightest doubt that recourse to the prayers of the martyrs has led to wonderful results.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Ambrose, *De viduis*, 55, ' Martyres obsecrandi, quorum vide-mur nobis quodam corporis pignore patrociniū vindicare. Possunt pro peccatis rogare nostris, qui proprio sanguine, etiam si qua habuerunt peccata, laverunt ; isti enim sunt Dei martyres, nostri praesules, speculatores vitae, actuumque nostrorum. Non erubescamus eos intercessores nostrae infirmitatis adhibere ; quia ipsi infirmitates corporis, etiam cum vincerent, cognoverunt.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Augustine, *De cura gerend. pro mortuis*, 6, ' Cum itaque recolit animus ubi sepultum sit carissimi corpus et occurrit locus nomine martyris venerabilis, eidem martyri animam dilectam commendat recordantis et precantis affectus ' ( ' When the mind calls up where the body of the loved one is buried and the place venerable by the name of the martyr occurs to the thoughts, the love of him who remembers and prays commends the loved soul to the same martyr ' ).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, *Serm.* cccxxiv. ; *De civit. Dei*, xxii. 8 ; cf. *C. Faust.* xx.

St. Jerome invoked Paula in the words

Help with thy prayers the extreme old age of thy devotee. Thy faith and thy works join thee to Christ; being in His presence, thou wilt more easily obtain that which thou dost ask.<sup>1</sup>

Such evidence is sufficient to show that at the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth, it was the ordinary Christian belief in the East and in the West, that it is lawful and expedient to address to the saints supplications for the benefit of their prayers to Almighty God.

An attempt has been made to lessen the import of this evidence, so far as St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Ambrose are concerned, on the ground that these writers speak elsewhere of the necessity of prayer being addressed only to God. The probability is that these other statements refer to prayers for direct help as distinguished from requests for prayer for the help of God, and, in any case, it has been allowed that the testimony of St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Ephraem the Syrian, and St. Augustine in favour of the practice of invocation is 'unshaken.'<sup>2</sup>

21; cf. St. Greg. Nyss. *Oratio in quadraginta martyres* (t. ii. pp. 211-2).

<sup>1</sup> St. Jerome, *Ep.* cviii. 33, 'Vale, O Paula, et cultoris tui ultimam senectutem orationibus juva. Fides et opera tua Christo te sociant, praesens facilius quod postulas impetrabis.'

<sup>2</sup> Luckock, *After Death*, p. 197.



It has, indeed, been suggested, on the strength of two passages,<sup>1</sup> that St. Augustine changed his mind and that his deliberate opinion was against the lawfulness of invocation. Neither of the passages supports this suggestion. The first declares that the writers of Holy Scripture would be grieved if man's hope were placed in them instead of in God; the second says that the Eucharistic sacrifice is not offered to the martyrs but to God, and that, though commemorated, they are not invoked by the priest who offers the sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> It is obvious, when the passages are viewed in their context, that the first does not bear on the subject of invocation; and that, in the second, it is the sacrificial prayer of the Liturgy of which it is said it is not addressed to the martyrs.<sup>3</sup>

We have seen that St. Gregory of Nazianzus, while elsewhere specifying that the help sought from the saint was the help of prayer, addressed St. Cyprian in the words, 'direct our speech and life.' Similar requests to the saints came to be customary. A typical instance may be seen in a hymn which passed into the office of the Western

<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine, *Serm.* xlv. 17; *De civ. Dei*, xxii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 'Non tamen a sacerdote qui sacrificat invocantur.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Luckock, *op. cit.*, pp. 195, 196. See also the passage in St. Augustine, *C. Faust. Man.* xx. 21.

Church, in which the Mother of our Lord was entreated :

Virgin all excelling,  
Gentle past our telling,  
Pardoned sinners render  
Gentle, chaste, and tender.

In pure paths direct us,  
On our way protect us,  
Till, on Jesus gazing,  
We shall join thy praising.<sup>1</sup>

Another instance is found in the Antiphon said after Compline during part of the year according to the Roman Breviary :

Hail, Queen, Mother of pity ; hail, our life, delight, and hope. To thee, in our exile do we, the children of Eve, cry. To thee we sigh, groaning and weeping in this valley of tears. Ah, then, our advocate, turn on us thy pitiful eyes. And, after this exile, show unto us Jesus

<sup>1</sup> ' Virgo singularis,  
Inter omnes mitis,  
Nos culpis solutos  
Mites fac et castos.

Vitam praesta puram :  
Iter para tutum,  
Ut videntes Iesum,  
Semper collaetemur.'

'This hymn' ('Ave maris stella'), 'so well known as to its words is of uncertain authorship. It has been wrongly ascribed to St. Bernard, as it is found in a St. Gall MS., No. 95, of the ninth century, and to Venantius Fortunatus (by M. A. Luchi, 1789), but on insufficient authority.' Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, p. 99.

the blessed fruit of thy womb. O merciful, O holy, O sweet Virgin Mary.<sup>1</sup>

Side by side with many devotions of which we have quoted two representative instances, there have been the explanations of theologians, that the saints have knowledge of such supplications because of their vision of God and of His revelation to them, and that the help sought is afforded by means of prayer to God. Their knowledge, St. Gregory the Great teaches, is derived from their vision of the 'glory of Almighty God.'<sup>2</sup>

As to the angels (writes Peter Lombard), so also to the saints, who stand before God, our petitions are made known in the Word of God whom they contemplate.<sup>3</sup>

It is manifest (says St. Thomas Aquinas) that they know in the Word the vows and devotions and prayers of men who seek their aid. . . . God alone knows of Himself the thoughts of our hearts, but none the less others know them in so far as revelation is made to them

<sup>1</sup> 'Salve, Regina, mater misericordiæ; vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus exules, filii Evæ. Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrymarum valle. Eia ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte. Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende. O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.' For the history of this antiphon see Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, pp. 991-2.

<sup>2</sup> St. Greg. Magn. *Moralia*, xii. 26, 'Quæ intus omnipotentis Dei claritatem vident, nullo modo credendum est quia foris sit aliquid quod ignorent.'

<sup>3</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sent.* IV. xlv. 6, 'Sicut enim angelis, ita et sanctis qui Deo assistunt, petitiones nostræ innotescunt in Verbo Dei quod contemplantur.'

either by the vision of the Word or in some other way.<sup>1</sup>

We seek (he writes elsewhere) from the Holy Trinity that God may have mercy upon us; we seek from whatever saints we address that they pray for us. . . . The petitions which we direct to them they know by the manifestation of God.<sup>2</sup>

God alone (explains Bellarmine) knows all the thoughts of all hearts, and that naturally and by His own power; but the saints only know those thoughts which are made manifest to them by God, whether by the Beatific Vision or even by a new revelation.<sup>3</sup>

It is not lawful (he says in the same treatise) to seek from the saints that they, as authors of divine benefits, would grant glory or grace or other means to beatitude. . . . When we say that nothing ought to be sought from the saints except that they pray for us, we are not treating about words, but about the sense of the words. For, so far as the words go, it is lawful to say, 'Saint Peter, have mercy on me, save me, open to me the gates of heaven, or give me health of body, give patience, give fortitude,' &c., provided we understand, 'Save me and

<sup>1</sup> St. Thom. Aq. *S. T. Supplement*, lxxii. 1, 'manifestum est quod in Verbo cognoscant vota, et devotiones, et orationes hominum qui ad eorum auxilium confugiunt. . . . Cogitationes cordium solus Deus per seipsum novit; sed tamen alii cognoscunt quatenus eis revelatur vel per visionem Verbi vel quocumque alio modo.'

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* II<sup>2</sup>. lxxiii. 4, 'A sancta Trinitate petimus ut nostri misereatur; ab aliis autem sanctis quibuscumque petimus ut orent pro nobis. . . . Petitiones quas ad eos dirigimus Deo manifestante cognoscunt.'

<sup>3</sup> Bellarmine, *De sanc. beat.* i. 20, 'Dico solum Deum cognoscere cogitationes omnes omnium cordium, idque naturaliter et propria virtute: sanctos autem solum cognoscere eas quae a Deo ipsis manifestantur sive beatifica visione sive etiam nova revelatione.'



have mercy upon me by praying for me, grant to me this and that by thy prayers and merits.' <sup>1</sup>

The Catechism of the Council of Trent made the same distinction :

We pray God that He Himself will either give us what is good or set us free from what is evil ; but we seek from the saints, because they are well pleasing to God, that they will become our patrons, that they may obtain for us from God those things of which we have need. Hence we use two forms of prayer of a different kind : for we say properly to God, ' Have mercy on us, Hear us ; ' to the saint, ' Pray for us.'

And the Catechism was careful, following the same line of thought as Bellarmine, to say that the form, ' Have mercy upon us,' could only rightly be addressed to a saint in the sense of ' Have mercy by praying for us.' <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bellarmine, *De sanc. beat.* i. 17, ' Non licet a sanctis petere ut nobis tanquam auctores divinatorum beneficiorum gloriam, vel gratiam, aliaque ad beatitudinem media concedant. . . . Est tamen notandum cum dicimus non debere peti a sanctis nisi ut orent pro nobis nos non agere de verbis sed de sensu verborum, nam quantum ad verba licet dicere: S. Petre, miserere mei, salva me, aperi mihi aditum caeli ; item da mihi sanitatem corporis, da patientiam, da mihi fortitudinem, etc., dummoda intelligamus salva me et miserere mei orando pro me, da mihi hoc et illud tuis precibus et meritis.'

<sup>2</sup> *Cat. Conc. Trid.* IV. vi. 3-4, ' Non enim eodem modo Deum et sanctos imploramus. Nam precamur Deum ut ipse vel bona det vel liberet a malis, a sanctis autem, quia gratiosi sunt apud Deum, petimus ut nostri patrociniū suscipiant, ut nobis a Deo impetrent ea quorum indigemus. Hinc duas adhibemus precandi formulas, modo differentes, ad Deum enim proprie dicimus Miserere nobis, audi nos ; ad sanctum Ora pro nobis.' ' Quanquam licet etiam alia quadam ratione petere a

So, too, in the East, the Russian Bishop Macarius writes :

In venerating the saints as faithful servants, as righteous men, and as friends of God, the holy Church invokes them in her prayers, not as gods capable of affording us assistance by themselves, but as our intercessors with God, who is the only author and dispenser of every gift and every grace to all His creatures.<sup>1</sup>

Similar statements are in the representative Catechisms of the Greek Church. In the Catechism of Bernardakis, in reply to the question

Do we sin against this [the first] commandment because we invoke the Holy Theotokos and the other saints ?

the answer is given

We do not sin, because we do not make gods of these saints, but only invoke them to intercede for us with God.<sup>2</sup>

The Catechism of Kyriakos has the explanation

sanctis ipsis ut nostri misereantur; sunt enim maxime misericordes, itaque possumus precari eos ut conditionis nostrae miseria permoti, sua nos apud Deum gratia et deprecatione iuvent.'

<sup>1</sup> The above is translated from the French translation of the Russian work : see *Théologie Dogmatique Orthodoxe*, ii. 660.

<sup>2</sup> Ἱερὰ Κατήχησις, p. 36, Δὲν ἀμαρτάνομεν, διότι δὲν θεοποιούμεν τοὺς ἁγίους τούτους, ἀλλὰ μόνον τοὺς παρακαλοῦμεν νὰ μεσιτεύσουν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν Θεόν. There is almost an identical statement in Moschakis, Ὁρθόδοξος Χριστιανικὴ κατήχησις, § 60.

Prayer, properly speaking, is directed to God ; but, if we pray also to the saints, we do this, not because we look on them as a sort of gods, who are able of themselves to help us—God forbid such blasphemy!—but because we believe that, as friends of God by reason of their holiness and moral purity, they intercede with Him on our behalf by means of their prayers, as also we who are alive pray for one another, and can ask for one another's prayers.<sup>1</sup>

These are the careful distinctions of theologians. It may be doubted whether the majority of those who in the Middle Ages used such devotions as we have described, or of those who use them now, have thought otherwise than that their words were directly heard by the saint, and that the help afforded included much more than prayer.

We have hitherto ignored the question who, in the judgment of those who have practised invocation of saints, may be invoked. On this point clear distinctions are not found in early theology. By an argument from analogy it may be thought probable that, as the Liturgies and the teaching of St. Cyril of Jerusalem distinguish the great saints

<sup>1</sup> Χριστιανική Κατήχησις, § 44, 'Ἡ προσευχή ἀποτείνεται κυρίως πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, ἐὰν δὲ δεώμεθα καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους, τοῦτο πράττομεν οὐχὶ διότι θεωροῦμεν αὐτοὺς ὡς θεοὺς τινας οἵτινες ἡδύναντο ἀφ' ἐαυτῶν νὰ βοηθήσωσιν ἡμᾶς, ἀπαγε τῆς βλασφημίας ! ἀλλὰ διότι ὡς φίλοι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἕνεκα τῆς ἀγιότητος καὶ ἠθικῆς αὐτῶν καθαρότητος πιστεύομεν ὅτι διὰ τῶν δεήσεων αὐτῶν πρεσβεύουσιν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν αὐτῷ, ὅπως καὶ οἱ ζῶντες προσευχόμεθα ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων καὶ δυνάμεθα νὰ αἰτῶμεν ἀλλήλων τὰς δεήσεις.

from the general body of the faithful departed with a view to asking God for the prayers of the former and to praying for the latter, so invocation would naturally be addressed only to the great saints. Some doubt may be cast on the soundness of this inference, possibly by two passages in the writings of St. Gregory of Nazianzus,<sup>1</sup> and more probably by the general indefiniteness of early theology as to distinctions among the holy dead. In the West the ordinary practice which the Middle Ages inherited from the later patristic period, and bequeathed to the modern Roman Church, was to restrict invocation to the canonized saints. Though the ordinary practice, it has not been regarded as the only possibility; and at the present time there are two schools of thought on the subject among Roman Catholics. St. Thomas Aquinas repudiated the invocation of the souls in purgatory on the grounds that 'they do not yet enjoy the vision of the Word,'<sup>2</sup> and that 'they are not in a condition of offering prayer.'<sup>3</sup> On the

<sup>1</sup> He invokes Constantius and any kings before him who loved Christ with the saving clause 'If thou hast perception' (*εἰ τις αἰσθῆται*): see *Orat.* iv. 3. He invokes his sister Gorgonia with a similar saving clause: see *Orat.* viii. 23. But both these are simply rhetorical addresses differing considerably from the invocations already quoted from St. Gregory of Nazianzus and others.

<sup>2</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.* II<sup>2</sup>. lxxxiii. 4, 'illi qui sunt in hoc mundo aut in purgatorio nondum fruuntur visione Verbi ut possint cognoscere ea quae nos cogitamus vel dicimus.'

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 11, 'non sunt in statu orandi.' It may be worth while for



other hand, Bellarmine teaches 'there is no doubt that' the souls in purgatory 'pray for themselves,' and 'it is probable that they pray for us.' He thinks it unnecessary under ordinary circumstances to make requests for their prayers, but does not deny the lawfulness of doing so.<sup>1</sup> And to quote a modern writer, the Jesuit Schouppe thinks the greater probability is in favour of the opinion that 'the souls in purgatory pray for us,' and describes as probable the view that

it is lawful to invoke the souls in purgatory as it is lawful to ask for the prayers of holy men who are living on earth, though this is a practice which the custom of the Church has not publicly adopted.<sup>2</sup>

The different view taken by Eastern Christians of the state of the dead and the rejection in the East of the clear cut distinctions between departed souls who are among the saved customary in

those who are interested in St. Thomas's view of the state of the dead to consult Cajetan's commentary on this article of the *Summa*.

<sup>1</sup> Bellarmine, *De Purgatorio*, ii. 15, 'Non est incredibile etiam animas purgatorii pro nobis orare et impetrare;' 'non videtur dubium quin pro se ipsis orent;' 'probabile est eas pro nobis orare;' 'quamquam haec vera sint, tamen superfluum videtur ab eis ordinarie petere ut pro nobis orent, quia non possunt ordinarie cognoscere quid agamus in particulari sed solum in genere sciunt nos in multis periculis versari.'

<sup>2</sup> Schouppe, *Elementa Theologiae Dogmaticae*, xix. 121, 'Probabilis animae purgatorii orant pro nobis praesertim eas iuvantibus. . . . Probabilis quoque est sententia Bellarmini licitum esse animas purgatorii invocare sicut preces piorum hominum in terris viventium licet poscere, quod tamen Ecclesia publice facere non consuevit.'

mediaeval Western and modern Roman theology necessarily results in this question as to the persons who may be invoked being regarded altogether differently in the East. Mr. A. C. Headlam has pointed out that the invocation of the faithful departed generally is 'the habitual custom of the Russian Church,' and has illustrated the extent to which this custom is popularly adopted by observing :

Often, when a child who has lost its mother is praying, he may be heard adding her name to those of the other saints whom he asks to pray for him. Mutual prayer of the dead for the living, of the living for the dead, and of both for the whole Church, is to the Russian the bond which links together the Church in one Communion of Saints.<sup>1</sup>

And, as Mr. Headlam has noticed, there is an example of such prayers in a poem by the theologian Khomiakoff which was translated by Mr. W. Palmer :

Dear children, at that same still midnight do ye,  
As I once prayed for you, now in turn pray for me ;  
Me who loved well the Cross on your foreheads to trace ;  
Now commend me in turn to the mercy and grace  
Of our gracious and merciful God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Headlam, *The Teaching of the Russian Church*, p. 20, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> This poem is quoted in Russian and in Mr. Palmer's English translation in Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church during the last Fifty Years*, pp. 2, 3.

In Khomiakoff's *Essay on the Unity of the Church* he has explained at some length the theological principle which underlies this practice :

We know that when any one of us falls, he falls alone ; but no one is saved alone. He who is saved is saved in the Church, as a member of her, and in unity with all her other members. If any one believes, he is in the communion of faith ; if he loves, he is in the communion of love ; if he prays, he is in the communion of prayer. Wherefore no one can rest his hope on his own prayers, and every one who prays asks the whole Church for intercession, not as if he had doubts of the intercession of Christ, the one Advocate, but in the assurance that the whole Church ever prays for all her members. All the angels pray for us, the apostles, martyrs, and patriarchs, and above them all the Mother of our Lord, and this holy unity is the true life of the Church. But if the Church, visible and invisible, prays without ceasing, why do we ask her for her prayers ? Do we not entreat mercy of God and Christ, although His mercy preventeth our prayer ? The very reason that we ask the Church for her prayers is that we know that she gives the assistance of her intercession even to him that does not ask for it, and to him that asks she gives it in far greater measure than he asks : for in her is the fulness of the Spirit of God. Thus we glorify all whom God has glorified and is glorifying ; for how should we say that Christ is living within us, if we do not make ourselves like unto Christ ? Wherefore we glorify the saints, the angels, and the prophets, and more than all the most pure Mother of the Lord Jesus, not acknowledging her either to have been conceived without sin, or to have been perfect (for Christ alone is without

sin and perfect), but remembering that the pre-eminence, passing all understanding, which she has above all God's creatures, was borne witness to by the angel and by Elizabeth, and, above all, by the Saviour Himself when He appointed John, His great Apostle and seer of mysteries, to fulfil the duties of a son and to serve her. . . . Mutual prayer is the blood of the Church, and the glorification of God her breath. We pray in a spirit of love, not of interest, in the spirit of filial freedom, not of the law of the hireling demanding his pay.<sup>1</sup>

On a subject on which there has been so much rash and ignorant writing, from more points of view than one, as that of the invocation of saints, it may be well, before proceeding to set out the treatment which the matter has received in the Church of England, to quote two authoritative statements, the one of the Church of Rome, the other of the Russian Church.

The decree of the Council of Trent on the invocation of saints declares :

The saints reigning together with Christ offer their prayers to God on behalf of men, and it is good and useful to invoke them as suppliants and to take refuge in their prayers, support, and help, on account of the benefits to be obtained from God through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Who is our only Redeemer and Saviour ; and those who deny that the saints enjoying eternal

<sup>1</sup> Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church*, pp. 216, 219. The whole passage from which the above is an extract is well worth careful thought.



felicity in heaven are to be invoked, or who assert that they do not pray for men, or that the invocation of them to obtain their prayers for us even as individuals is idolatry, or that it is contrary to the Word of God and opposed to the honour of Jesus Christ, the one mediator of God and men, or that to supplicate verbally or mentally those who are reigning in heaven is foolish, hold an impious opinion.<sup>1</sup>

‘All superstition,’ the Council added later on, ‘in the invocation of saints is to be put down.’<sup>2</sup>

The *Longer Catechism of the Russian Church* asserts :

The faithful who belong to the Church militant upon earth, in offering their prayers to God, call at the same time to their aid the saints who belong to the Church in heaven; and these, standing on the highest steps of approach to God, by their prayers and intercessions purify, strengthen, and offer before God the prayers of the faithful living upon earth, and by the will of God

<sup>1</sup> Conc. Trid. Sess. xxv. *De invoc., vener., et reliq. sanctorum, et sac. imag.*, ‘Mandat sancta synodus omnibus episcopis et ceteris docendi munus curamque sustinentibus ut . . . fideles diligenter instruant, docentes eos sanctos una cum Christo regnantes orationes suas pro hominibus Deo offerre, bonum atque utile esse suppliciter eos invocare et ob beneficia impetranda a Deo per Filium eius Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum qui solus noster redemptor et salvator est, ad eorum orationes, opem auxiliumque confugere: illos vero, qui negant sanctos aeterna felicitate in caelo fruente invocandos esse, aut qui asserunt vel illos pro hominibus non orare, vel eorum ut pro nobis etiam singulis orent invocationem esse idololatriam, vel pugnare cum verbo Dei adversariusque honori unius mediatoris Dei et hominum Jesu Christi, vel stultum esse in caelo regnantibus voce vel mente supplicare, impie sentire’ (Hardouin, *Concilia*, x. 167–8).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ‘Omnis porro superstitio in sanctorum invocatione . . . tollatur’ (Hard. x. 169).

work graciously and beneficently upon them, either by invisible virtue, or by distinct apparitions, and in divers other ways.<sup>1</sup>

At various points in the history of the Reformation in the Church of England the subject of invocation of saints was necessarily in view. In 1536 the *Articles about religion set forth by the Convocation and published by the king's authority*, generally known as the 'ten articles,' were drawn up and sanctioned by Convocation, signed by the members of Convocation, headed by Thomas Cromwell, and issued in the name of King Henry VIII. Of these the seventh and eighth were entitled 'of honouring of saints' and 'of praying to saints.' They laid down :

As touching the honouring of saints, we will that all bishops and preachers shall instruct and teach our people committed by us unto their spiritual charge that saints now being with Christ in heaven be to be honoured of Christian people in earth, but not with that confidence and honour which are only due to God, trusting to attain at their hands that which must be had only of God ; but that they be thus to be honoured because they be known the elect persons of Christ, because they be passed in godly life out of this transitory world, because they already do reign in glory with Christ, and most specially to laud and praise Christ in them for their excellent virtues which He planted in them, for example, of and by

<sup>1</sup> Blackmore, *The Doctrine of the Russian Church*, p. 78.

them to such as are yet in this world to live in virtue and goodness, and also not to fear to die for Christ and His cause, as some of them did ; and finally to take them, in that they may, to be the advancers of our prayers and demands unto Christ. By these ways, and such like, be saints to be honoured and had in reverence, and by none other.

As touching praying to saints, we will that all bishops and preachers shall instruct and teach our people committed by us unto their spiritual charge that albeit grace, remission of sin, and salvation cannot be obtained but of God only by the mediation of our Saviour Christ, which is only sufficient mediator for our sins, yet it is very laudable to pray to saints in heaven everlastingly living, whose charity is ever permanent, to be intercessors, and to pray for us and with us unto Almighty God after this manner : All holy angels and saints in Heaven pray for us and with us unto the Father that for His dear Son Jesus Christ's sake we may have grace of Him and remission of our sins with an earnest purpose, not wanting ghostly strength, to observe and keep His holy commandments and never to decline from the same again unto our lives' end : and in this manner we may pray to our blessed Lady, to St. John Baptist, to all and every of the apostles or any other saint particularly, as our devotion doth serve us, so that it be done without any vain superstition, as to think that any saint is more merciful, or will hear us sooner than Christ, or that any saint doth serve for one thing more than other, or is patron of the same.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Lloyd, *Formularies of Faith put forth by Authority during the Reign of Henry VIII.*, pp. 14-15.

In 1537 a commission of bishops and divines under the presidency of Archbishop Cranmer drew up *The Institution of a Christian Man*, commonly known as the 'Bishops' Book.' It was signed by both the archbishops, all the diocesan bishops, and twenty-five doctors. It had no authority from either Convocation or Parliament, and King Henry VIII., though he ordered the reading of some part of it every Sunday for three years, refused to give it any formal sanction. In treating of the third commandment, this book contained the following teaching :

We think it convenient that all bishops and preachers shall instruct and teach the people committed unto their spiritual charge that (forasmuch as the gifts of health of body, health of soul, forgiveness of sins, the gift of grace, or life everlasting, and such other, be the gifts of God and cannot be given but by God) whosoever maketh invocation<sup>1</sup> to saints for these gifts, praying to them for any of the said gifts, or such like (which cannot be given but by God only), yieldeth the glory of God to His creature, contrary to this commandment. For God saith by His prophet, I will not yield my glory to any other. Therefore they that so pray to saints for these gifts, as though they could give them, or be the givers of them, transgress this commandment, yielding to a creature the honour of God. Nevertheless, to pray to saints to be intercessors

<sup>1</sup> On this use of the word 'invocation' to denote requests for what can be given only by God as distinct from request for prayers, see pp. 36, 37.



with us and for us to our Lord for our suits which we make to Him, and for such things as we can obtain of none but of Him, so that we make no invocation<sup>1</sup> of them, is lawful and allowed by the Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup>

In 1540 a commission, consisting of the two archbishops, six bishops, and twelve doctors, was appointed to draw up a statement of doctrine. In 1543 they had completed a revision of *The Institution of a Christian Man* which was submitted to and approved by Convocation and published with the authority of the king under the title of *A necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man*. It came to be known as the 'King's Book.' It repeated the instruction of the 'Bishops' Book' on the subject of the invocation of saints, with the exception that the phrase 'so that we make no invocation of them' was altered into 'so that we esteem not or worship not them as givers of those gifts, but as intercessors for the same.'<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the attitude taken up in the 'ten articles' of 1536, the 'Bishops' Book' of 1537, and the 'King's Book' of 1543 was clear and consistent. It was declared to be unlawful to seek from the saints those good things which can only be given by God; it was declared to be lawful

<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 32, and pp. 36, 37.

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd, *Formularies of Faith put forth by Authority during the Reign of Henry VIII.*, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 304-5.

to ask them for their prayers. In conformity with such teaching the words 'Have mercy upon us,' or 'Grant us grace,' or 'Bestow on us everlasting life,' could only be addressed to a saint if their obvious meaning were explained away; the words 'Pray for us' might rightly be addressed to a saint. This is a position which, it is well to observe, is in substantial agreement with that taken up in the Catechism of the Council of Trent.

The Latin and English Litanies of the Middle Ages had contained long lists of the names of saints, each name followed by 'Pray for us.' In 1544 Cranmer, at the king's command, revised the old Litanies and produced a form in which the only remaining invocations were :

Saint Mary, Mother of God our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
pray for us.

All holy angels and archangels, and all holy orders of  
blessed spirits, pray for us.

All holy patriarchs and prophets, apostles, martyrs,  
confessors, and virgins, and all the blessed company of  
heaven, pray for us.<sup>1</sup>

In the revision of the service books which went on from 1549 to 1662 and resulted in the present Book of Common Prayer, all invocations of saints were omitted. Of the services thus dealt with, invocations had never formed part of the Order or

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 415.

Canon of the Mass ; where they occurred elsewhere they were removed.

In 1553 the 'forty-two articles,' which had been drawn up by Archbishop Cranmer with the help of other bishops, were issued with the intention that they should be subscribed by the clergy. They bore the title *Articles agreed upon by the bishops and other learned men in the synod at London in the year of our Lord God MDLII., for the avoiding of controversy in opinions and the establishment of a godly concord in certain matters of religion* ; but it is doubtful whether they had received the sanction of Convocation.<sup>1</sup> The twenty-third article contained the words :

The doctrine of school authors concerning . . . invocation of saints is a fond thing vainly feigned and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture but rather repugnant to the word of God.

The 'thirty-eight articles' of 1563 and the 'thirty-nine articles' of 1571 were sanctioned by Convocation and approved by Queen Elizabeth. The twenty-second article was similar to the twenty-third of 1553, but the phrase 'the doctrine of school authors' was altered to 'the Romish doctrine,' which in the Latin version was rendered

<sup>1</sup> On this point, see Dixon, *History of the Church of England from the Abolition of the Roman Jurisdiction*, iii. 513-7 ; Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, i. 15-20.

by 'doctrina Romanensium,' and the words 'invented' and 'warranty' were used instead of 'feigned' and 'warrant.'

In considering what it was which the compilers of our present Articles thus condemned as 'a fond thing vainly invented,' it is necessary to examine the meaning of two phrases—'invocation of saints' and 'Romish doctrine.'

It has been assumed by very many that the phrase 'invocation of saints' is used in the Article in the same sense as that which we have defined as our own way of using it, namely, to denote the addressing of requests to the saints for the help of their prayers. It is very doubtful whether this is the meaning which the compilers of the Article attached to it. In two thoughtful letters which appeared in the *Guardian* for October 5 and November 9, 1898, Mr. Leighton Pullan called attention to the fact that in *The Institution of a Christian Man*, published in 1537, and in Archbishop Ussher's *Answer to a Jesuit Challenge*, published in 1624, the phrase 'invocation of saints' was used to denote 'addresses to the saints similar in wording to the adoration which we render to God,' and 'formal and absolute prayers' 'tendered to the saints' as distinguished from 'requests for the prayers of the saints' and 'requests of the same nature with those which are



in this kind usually made unto the living.' We have already referred to the passage in the *Necessary doctrine and erudition for any Christian Man*, published in 1543, in which the word 'invocation' is retained in this sense in one of the two places in which it was so used in the passage we then quoted from *The Institution of a Christian Man*. In the *Considerationes modestae et pacificae* of Bishop William Forbes of Edinburgh, published in 1658, but necessarily written before the Bishop's death in 1634, while the use of the word 'invocation' varies, a distinction is drawn between 'religious invocation,' or such prayer as can be rightly addressed only to God, and 'mere invocation or addressing of angels and saints to pray God with us and for us,' a practice which 'is not to be condemned either as unlawful or as useless' (ii. 194-5, 210-11). The fact that 'invocation' was used in 1537 and 1543 to denote prayers for gifts of grace such as God only can give, and that some survival of this use remained in the early part of the seventeenth century, shows that it is at least possible that this is the meaning which was attached to it in 1553, 1563, and 1571.

What, then, is the meaning of the other phrase? It is important to notice the change made in 1563 from 'doctrine of school authors'

(‘scholasticorum doctrina’) to ‘Romish doctrine’ (‘doctrina Romanensium’). The statement of Bishop Harold Browne, that to know what this is ‘we must consult the decrees of the Council of Trent,’<sup>1</sup> may be set aside by simply observing that the Article with this phrase in it was subscribed by the Upper House of Convocation on January 29, 1563, and the Lower House of Convocation in February, 1563;<sup>2</sup> while the Session of the Council of Trent in which this subject was discussed did not take place till December, 1563.<sup>3</sup> Since the article was altered so as not to express condemnation of the teaching of the Schoolmen, and could not because of its date have been written or accepted with the decree of the Council of Trent in view, what was the idea which the phrase

<sup>1</sup> Browne, *An Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 517.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g., Cardwell, *Synodalia*, ii. 511, 514, 516. That is, 1563 according to our division of the year; it was 1562 according to the old reckoning.

<sup>3</sup> See, Theiner, *Acta Conc. Trid.* ii. 499–503, 679; Hardouin, *Concilia*, x. 167. Cf. also Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, ii. 538, ‘With regard to the doctrines here condemned, it is important to bear in mind that when the Article was originally drawn up, and even when it was revised and republished in 1563, none of them had been considered by the Council of Trent. The Article cannot, then, have been deliberately aimed at the formal decrees of that Council; and, as a matter of fact, the decrees on these particular subjects, which were published during the last session of the Council in December 1563, were drawn up with studied moderation, and some of the strong language of our Article could hardly be truthfully said to apply to the doctrine as stated in them, though it certainly was not one whit too strong in its condemnation of the current practice and teaching which the Reformers had before them.’

‘Romish doctrine’ (‘doctrina Romanensium’) was intended to convey? The term ‘Romanenses,’ Archdeacon Hardwick pointed out, was already in use ‘to designate the extreme mediaeval party.’<sup>1</sup> The change implied, wrote Dean Plumptre, that the condemnation was directed ‘against the popular current teaching of the Romish theologians of the time.’<sup>2</sup> ‘Romish doctrine,’ say Dr. Maclear and Mr. Williams, was ‘an expression used in the sixteenth century to denote the [teaching of the] extreme mediaeval party in the Church.’<sup>3</sup> These statements of moderate and thoughtful men indicate what we believe to be the true meaning of the phrase. The Article, in our judgment, was intended to condemn the practices which had already been condemned in 1537 and 1543 by the ‘Bishops’ Book’ and the ‘King’s Book,’ and to leave open the right or the wrong of the limited practice of asking the saints for the help of their prayers, which those books had allowed. ‘Nothing, I

<sup>1</sup> Hardwick, *History of the Articles*, p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison*, pp. 307–8, ‘It was directed, not so much against the formulated statements of Lombard or Aquinas, still less against the earlier teaching of the Greek and Latin Fathers, as against the popular current teaching of the Romish theologians of the time; and so far as the Tridentine decrees, with whatever reserves and limitations, embodied that teaching, they come under that condemnation.’ The phrase would perhaps be more accurate if ‘popular current Roman teaching’ had been used instead of ‘popular current teaching of the Romish theologians.’

<sup>3</sup> Maclear and Williams, *An Introduction to the Articles of the Church of England*, p. 263.

think, can be clearer,' wrote Dr. Hort, 'than that the Article does not condemn all doctrine that may be called a doctrine of purgatory.'<sup>1</sup> And, if it does not condemn every doctrine of purgatory, neither does it condemn every doctrine 'concerning' 'invocation of saints.'<sup>2</sup>

The Church of England, then, in the course of the Reformation did three things with regard to the invocation of saints. In the first place, she entirely removed any kind of invocation from the service books. Secondly, in the Articles drawn up in order that they might form a statement which the clergy must agree not to contravene in their public teaching, she condemned the extreme practices and ways of thought in which the saints had been called upon to grant boons which are in the power of God alone, and had been given a prominence in devotion which was derogatory to the honour of God. Thirdly, in the same document she left it an open question whether the clergy might express approval of the practice of invocation of saints in the limited sense of seeking from the saints the help of their prayers.

<sup>1</sup> See *Life and Letters of F. J. A. Hort*, ii. 336.

<sup>2</sup> The second part of the Homily concerning Prayer in the Homilies of Queen Elizabeth's reign condemns any kind of invocation of saints. But most of what is said is applicable only to such forms of invocation as infringe the prerogatives of God. On the non-authoritative character of the Homilies see Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, ii. 726-8.



How far was the position thus taken up by the Church of England in accordance with Catholic theology and practice? How far was it wise and expedient? Such a policy was, of course, open to the objections and the attacks which are always likely to assail any form of a *via media*. Romanist and Puritan alike found much to say against the whole attitude adopted by the English Church. To resolve deliberately, as the Church of England did, that, affirming with the greatest clearness and strength the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith, she would leave it possible for differing modes of thought on much which was subsidiary to be held both by her clergy and by her laity, and would allow, to use the Bishop of Rochester's expression, 'men who seemed very near to the Roman and Puritan positions respectively'<sup>1</sup> to remain and minister within her fold, was a line of action which almost courted the onslaughts of very different antagonists, and has at various times strained almost to breaking point the loyalty of sections of Church people. Yet, it has been steadily maintained in official statements when individuals on every side seemed ready to abandon it; the calm judgment of far-sighted divines set

<sup>1</sup> See the Bishop of Rochester's letter in the *Times* of September 12, 1898. Part of this letter was quoted in the *Church Quarterly Review*, October, 1898, p. 35.

their seal upon it when the Reformation was completed in 1662 ; it has at least left open possibilities of good which else must have been closed.

Let us examine separately in this particular matter the three parts of the action of the English Church. The first part was the removal of any kind of invocation from the service books. For such a proceeding there was much to be said from two points of view. It was a return to early custom, since for almost six hundred years from the foundation of Christianity no invocations of saints were to be found in the authorized services of the Church. It was a practical necessity of the times if the aim of the English Church to possess a form of public worship which could be used by those who, being agreed upon the essentials of the Faith, differed about much else was to be carried out.

Secondly, the clergy were committed to a strong condemnation of the custom of seeking from the saints gifts which can be bestowed only by God. The need of such a condemnation would be denied by few, and was recognized even by the Council of Trent. 'All superstition,' said the Council, 'in the invocation of Saints is to be put down.' That vigorous action was called for may be illustrated from much which, in spite of the Council of Trent and in marked disregard of its teaching, has con-

tinued to exist and to be practically authorized in the Church of Rome to the present time. Not to quote so startling an instance as the well-known *Anima Virginis*, we find in one of the best Roman devotional books, published in Latin, and so not in use among the ignorant, having passed through many editions and been much revised, issued with the approbation of a Cardinal Archbishop, the following prayer :

O most wise Mother, receive me among thy devotees. Into thy blessed hands and into the bosom of thy pity I commend my soul and my body with filial confidence now and in the hour of my death. Rule, teach, guide, and defend me in all things according to thy will. Look, O Lady, upon the prayers of thy servant, most unworthy though he be : look on all my necessities. To thee I fly as my only refuge : hide me under the covering of thy motherly protection. Do not repel me from thee, O Mother of pity, for without thee my soul cannot live. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

To quote one other instance, taken almost at haphazard, a French book honoured with a brief

<sup>1</sup> *Coeleste Palmetum*, p. 246 (edition 8, 1884), 'O sapientissima Mater ! suscipe me in clientulum tuum. In benedictas manus tuas, et in sinum misericordiae tuae animam et corpus meum cum filiali fiducia nunc et in hora mortis meae commendo. Rege, doce, dirige et defende me in omnibus secundum tuam voluntatem. Respice, O Domina, ad servi tui, licet indignissimi, preces ; respice ad omnes necessitates meas. Ad te ego velut unicum asylum meum confugio : sub pallio maternae protectionis tuae absconde me. Noli me a te, Mater misericordiae, repellere ; nam sine te vivere non potest anima mea. Amen.'

from Pope Pius IX., and commended by many cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, puts in the mouth of those who use it words addressed to the holy Mother of our Lord, which make their confidence against the hour of death depend upon her aid.<sup>1</sup> Such prayers for the educated, coupled with the state of mind of many ignorant Roman Catholics, supply sufficient justification for a strong condemnation of and resistance to the abuses of the invocation of saints. If a misunderstanding of the strong terms of the English article has had some share in leading English people to think too little about the saints, the gentler action of the Council of Trent has certainly failed to keep out much which is inconsistent with the language which the Council used.

Thirdly, the Church of England left open the lawfulness and expediency of that limited form of invocation which asks the saints for the help of their prayers. Here, too, we believe that the

<sup>1</sup> *Recueil complet des paillettes d'or*, iv. 128, 'A cette heure, ô Marie, Marie que j'ai tant de fois invoquée, soyez près de ma couche ; soyez-y comme y serait ma mère si je l'avais encore ! Peut-être ma langue paralysée ne pourra pas prononcer votre nom, mais mon cœur le redira toujours ! Vous y serez, n'est-ce pas, ô mère de Jésus, ô ma mère ? Je vous appelle maintenant pour l'heure de ma mort. Et cet appel me laisse le calme et la paix. Oui, serais-je seul, seul expirant loin de tout secours, seul sans une main aimée pour me fermer les yeux, je mourrai souriant parce que vous serez là, ô Marie, fidèle à ce rendez-vous que je vous donne ; vous y serez ; je le crois, je l'espère, j'en suis sûr !'



course taken was wisely chosen. The condemnation of the 'Romish doctrine' provided against any recourse to the saints which infringed upon the prerogatives of Almighty God; in the allowance of invocation in its present ordinary sense in private devotions outside the authorized services of the Church care was taken not to condemn a custom which had the support of the teaching and practice of great Fathers of the East and of the West. The abuse was strongly condemned; the use was left open.

It has been supposed by some that the prohibition of dealings with the dead in the Old Testament is in itself sufficient proof that any form of invocation of saints is wrong. Not to dwell on the fact that the whole question has been altered by the work of our Lord among the dead,<sup>1</sup> the clearer light thrown upon their state by Christian doctrine, and the teaching of St. Paul about the one Body of the Church,<sup>2</sup> it must be noticed that the prohibition of the Old Testament was not against seeking for the prayers of the departed, but against endeavouring to obtain information or advice from them. In the

<sup>1</sup> See 1 St. Pet. iii. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> See especially 1 Cor. xii. 12-27; Eph. i. 22-3, ii. 19-22, iv. 4; Col. i. 18, ii. 16-9. The general imagery of the arena in Heb. xii. 1, though not the phrase *νέφος μαρτύρων*, seems to suggest that the saints of the old covenant have knowledge of some struggles of Christians; but stress cannot rightly be laid on this.

Mosaic Law the words are, 'There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer.'<sup>1</sup> The words of Isaiah, rebuking the breach of this law, are, 'And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter, should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?'<sup>2</sup> In both places it is clearly enquiry of the dead which is prohibited or condemned; in both places the right course is shown to be in seeking guidance from God, since in Deuteronomy the prohibition is followed by the promise of the prophet who is to speak in the name of God,<sup>3</sup> and in Isaiah the condemnation leads on to the command, 'To the law and to the testimony.'<sup>4</sup> Whatever bearing these passages might have on seeking some gifts from the saints, and we doubt whether at all directly they could have any, they have none on seeking the help of their prayers.

The gist of the matter is, What form of invocation, if any, is identical in principle with the prac-

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xviii. 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. viii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xviii. 15-22.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. viii. 20.

tice of 'comprecation,' or praying to God to receive benefit by means of the prayers of saints? If the request addressed to the saint is for his prayers to God, and if it is understood that any knowledge which he possesses of the request is the result of his beholding God or receiving revelation from God, then clearly the making of such request does not in principle differ from prayer addressed to God for the prayers of the saint. If, on the other hand, the request is for gifts which God alone can grant, or if it is supposed that the saint has independent knowledge of the words addressed to him, then, as clearly, such a practice is different in principle from 'comprecation.' It follows that invocation of the former kind is lawful, and that invocation of the latter kind is wrong.

We believe, then, that each part of the action of the English Church on this subject was thoroughly in accordance with Catholic theology and practice. Further, it was eminently calculated to meet the needs of the times, and to allow for deep-seated characteristics of the human mind. The latter aspect has been admirably treated by Bishop Alexander Forbes, of Brechin, in his *Explanation of the Thirty-Nine Articles* :

There will always be (he says) a tendency in human nature to rest in something short of the pure essence of God. His unapproachable holiness bears down upon the

human spirit with a crushing weight. Anything that will satisfy the religious instinct, and at the same time prevent the soul from too great a proximity to Him Who is a consuming fire, will be eagerly hailed by those who recognize what God is and what they are, till the correctives supplied by the true faith in the images of love and mercy revealed in the Gospel make themselves living truths within the soul. . . . Not merely are there deep principles in the human mind which lead to a resting in secondary worship, but the political condition of a people will strongly influence belief in this respect. It cannot be doubted that the state of the old heathenism, at the time of the state establishment by Constantine, told sensibly in the direction of the development of saint-worship. In Italy, specially, the old Pagan ideas got baptized, and the religious devotion of the vulgar was transformed from the elder forms of heathenism to the purer cultus of the personages of the Holy Gospel and of the Church. That the world gained immensely by the change, the most bigoted religionist must admit. To withdraw the mind from the sensual images that belonged to the beautiful but corrupt Nature-worship of the heathen to those of the self-denying heroism of the martyrs must be acknowledged as an immense gain by all those who hold that the imagination exercises power over the whole man ; but still, beneficial as the process was, it cannot be doubted that it carried a danger within it, and that it laid the foundation of a lower state of things in which a lower standard of religious morality came to be tolerated, and the idea of the one true God to be obscured. . . . At the time of the Reformation all this had specially to be insisted upon. The popularity of some devotions must have been very great if the offerings at St. Thomas's shrine at Canter-



bury in one year amounted to 934*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.*, while that at our Lord's was nothing, and at our Lady's 4*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.* The gross immorality which was everywhere prevalent found a satisfaction for those spiritual aspirations which never die, even in the bad, in the cultus of some easy saint.

But there is another aspect of the practice which it would be uncandid and unphilosophical to pass over. There are certain high-strung souls, of whose undivided and entire love to God there can be no doubt, whose intense personal devotion to our Lord is the warmest, and who realize His Passion in a measure into which our cold hearts cannot enter, to whom this devotion is congenial. In them it exists in entire subordination to the feelings which the incommunicable right of God to our entire selves engenders and cultivates. We may not be able to understand them, but such there are. There must, therefore, be some aspect of this practice which appeals to a very high part of our nature, and therefore well deserves our careful consideration (pp. 379-82).

And, at the end of the long and careful examination of the evidence, in the preparation of which he had the invaluable help of Dr. Pusey,<sup>1</sup> Bishop Forbes concluded :

In principle, then, there is no question, herein, between us and any other portion of the Catholic Church. Even where the incommunicable attributes of God have, in

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, iv. 146 : ' Pusey revised the Bishop's work throughout, correcting it minutely, besides himself writing the explanation of some of the Articles. He supplied almost the whole of the passages which, under the head of Article XXII., deal with the subject of purgatory and the invocation of saints.'

expression at least, been invaded, the real underlying belief has been explained to be that nothing is obtained for man, no grace, no aid, no gift for body, soul, or spirit, except through or from the One Mediator between God and man, our adorable Lord, Christ Jesus. Prayer to the saints in heaven is explained, again and again, to be the same *in kind* as the prayers to the saints on earth (p. 422).

We have written on this subject because of our conviction that a serious examination of it is a need in the Church of England at the present time. Side by side with thoughtful and guarded prayers for the intercessions of the saints there has grown up of late years much that is undesirable and harmful. Devotions are used among ourselves which are not less extravagant than some in use among Roman Catholics. There are those who are cultivating a religious temper which makes it natural that in the hour of death they should commit themselves to the protection of the saints rather than to the mercy of Almighty God.

In view of the present needs of the English Church much which has recently been said or written about the invocation of saints is unsatisfying. It is impossible that the matter should be settled in an offhand manner. The rash statements sometimes heard in sermons or read in newspapers, and made in defiance of history and Catholic theology, that the invocation of saints,

as necessarily involved in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, is an essential part of the Christian system, are simply mischievous. Nor are indiscriminating assertions of the unlawfulness of the practice likely to be profitable. Sweeping condemnations which ignore real differences will convince nobody. Abuses are not met by failing to recognize a lawful use.

It may well be wished that among clergy and laity alike may be found the balanced judgment which characterized Bishop William Forbes of Edinburgh when he wrote :

Let God alone be religiously adored : let Him alone be prayed to, through Christ, Who is the only and sole Mediator, truly and properly speaking, between God and man. Let not the very ancient custom received in the universal Church, as well Greek as Latin, of addressing the angels and saints after the manner we have mentioned be condemned or rejected as impious, nor even as vain and foolish, by the more rigid Protestants. Let the foul abuses and superstitions which have crept in be taken away. And so peace may thereafter easily be established and sanctioned between the dissentient parties, as regards this controversy. Which may the God of peace and of all pious concord vouchsafe to grant for the sake of His only-begotten Son.<sup>1</sup>

To despise or condemn the universal consent of the whole Church is a thing perilous to the last degree.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Forbes, *Consid. mod. et pacif.* ii. 312, 313.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 264, 265.

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